



**American Legion Auxiliary Department of Arizona**

**Historian**

**2024-2025**

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## **End of Year Summary 2024-2025**

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Arizona 2024-2025 started in June of 2024 at the El Conquistador Resort, hosted by American Legion Post 132. The Auxiliary Convention had 328 registered attendees. The installation ceremony was officiated by past Western Division National Vice President Ginger Cox. Past Department Presidents Cindy Queen and Yolanda Bonilla performed the Sergeant at Arms role, while past Department Helen Griffin performed the role of Chaplain. President Stacey Mayberry and the rest of the newly elected Department officers were installed and President Stacey Mayberry announced the theme of "Pups And Warriors Side by Side" as well as the special project of "P.A.W.S.S."

July brought many 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations to Districts and Post homes around the state. There were many BBQ's, parades, picnics and tournaments to celebrate the holiday and our Nations independence. Some Districts and Units also completed their annual organizational meetings to start planning their new administrative year.

Late July mean back to school in Arizona. Units all over the state worked hard to help students get ready to go back to school by providing school supplies, gift cards, backpacks, school pantry supplies and clothing. Units also helped the teachers and bus drivers with items they needed as well

In August the Department of Arizona's Officer and Chairman meeting was held at Post 107 in Phoenix Arizona. The Chairman was trained on their role as Chairman and their duties and responsibilities as such. There was a great exercise where each Chairman could ask questions and Department handed out important dates for the year to have poppy's orders in and mandates due dates. Questions and Answers could be discussed collaboratively amongst the group.

Later in August the Arizona delegation attended the National Convention in New Orleans LA. The Department of Arizona was very proud to have the National Convention to show their dedication and service to the American Legion Auxiliary.

Many of our units along with the American Legion Family hosted the Safe Night Out "Truck A Treat" for the children of the Legion and for the community in which their post was located. This was a safe environment for our Children and youth of our post and community. One Post coupled with a farmer's market (Big Catz) event which allowed the parents of the children to shop for fresh produce, various food trucks and naturalist vendors selling their wares.

Fall Conference was held at the El Conquistador Resort, hosted by American Legion Post 132, Ora Valley, Arizona from November 1 – 3, 2024. Our special guest was Mr. Ryan and Janna Newman and their team from Pups and Warriors Side by Side (P.A.W.S.S) to speak about the effects of PTSD on Veteran's and how the American Legion Auxiliary can help to raise funds for the P.A.W.S.S. Mr. Newman story of his personal struggle with PTSD and life struggles after he returned home from duty was very moving, and emotional everyone was in tears. P.A.W.S.S is a well-being is at the forefront of what we're working together towards. Our program and activities are designed to be a catalyst that helps Veterans, First Responders and their Families reach their goals and fulfill their potential. Learn more about the positive impact we have and join us in bringing about positive change. There were announcements made for nomination consideration for the 2025-2026 year and members participated in a memorial service held in conjunction with the American Legion Family.

Many members and units throughout the Department participated in Veterans Day activities which included parades, cemetery ceremonies, potlucks and acknowledgements honoring all Veterans

November also starts the season of giving. Many Units throughout the state of Arizona adopted veterans' families for Thanksgiving. Units provided gift baskets with turkey, ham and all the fixings so

that struggling families could enjoy a hearty meal for the holiday. Some Units also included gift cards so that the families could also purchase every day needed items or purchase gasoline to get to work. These gift cards were essential to many families because of job losses due to the pandemic. Many Units also provided a free meal to Veteran's at the Post home for the Thanksgiving holiday. Once Post cooked and serviced Thanksgiving dinner to homeless veterans, providing food and companionship.

In December, the Department of Arizona hosted three Christmas Shops in conjunction with the Phoenix, The Phoenix Christmas Shop, coordinated by Chairman Christine Paulson from Unit 27, was held December 2nd to 4th. Invitations to veterans went out through the VAMC and through local veteran support organizations. The Tucson Christmas Shop was Department of Arizona Legion Commander Manny Beltran; Department of Arizona Auxiliary 2nd Vice Marge Christianson attended the opening ceremony. Department of Arizona has three (3) Gold medal winners from Tucson heading to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Our chairman's has a big heart and support of the healing benefits of art.

Over thirty Auxiliary members from Arizona attended the National Mission Training session held on February 1, 2025, in Las Vegas, Nevada at Tuscany Suites. National President Trish Ward

On January 5, the Department of Arizona Legion Family held its annual Open House. Officers and members from the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons and Riders from across the state attended the pot luck festivities. It was an honor to also have in attendance the National Commander of American Legion James A. LaCoursiere, Jr.

Members from all over Arizona traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada to attend the annual Mission Training and National Junior meetings February 1, 2025. There were round table discussions about how to put together a "menu" for each Unit. The menu was meant to be a guide for each Unit to keep members focused on the programs and mission. Constitution and bylaws, VA & R and membership were also

discussed. Once meetings were completed, members enjoyed all the fun and excitement Las Vegas has to offer.

Many units along with the Legion Family celebrated the 106<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the American Legion by have cake, ice cream, and fun and games .

Department of Arizona Post 26 family provided breakfast burritos and snack bags for a Arizona Army National Guard unit that deployed overseas. 308 burritos, 151 snack bags, and they were able to escort the unit to the airport.

A car show was held at Arizona State Veterans Home sponsored by the Veterans. Vietnam Veterans got pinned, by Veterans Affinity Group. The residents crafted signs, tie-dyed tee shirts, jewelry, paintings, etc. A great time was had by all.

Unit 86 along with Post 86 hosted Soldiers R US. 24 boxes were packed to be sent to Guantanamo Bay and Korea.

National President Trish Ward visit to Arizona was April 6 – April 11, 2025. She arrived at Sky Harbor Airport on April 6, 2025, and was here until Friday April 11, 2025. During her visit the Department of Arizona kept her real busy, and made sure she did not go hungry. Along with Department President Stacey Mayberry and other Department officers they traveled to the northern part of the state. They visited Flagstaff State Veterans Home where President Tish was able to visit with Veterans and participate in activities with some of the veterans, she was also able to eat lunch with them. She also visit Montezuma Castle, Old Fort Verde, Post 93 Museum Alcantara, She attended a couple of Meet and Greet at Post 44, and Post 26.and a Luncheons at Post 62. Post 25, and 107 hosted dinner for the President Trish.



National President Trish Ward at Arizona Capitol Museum with a piece of the Hull from the USS Arizona. This was a very moving moment. She stated she could feel the heartbeats of the sailors that perished.

April is designated the month of the military child. Units across the state wore purple in support of these kids and Units with military bases nearby held activities for them.

Sunday April 26, 2025 our Department of Arizona Auxiliary held their annual junior convention and Elections at American Legion Auxiliary Unit 41, in Phoenix, AZ.

May is also Poppy month and Units were able to hold poppy breakfasts, lunches and dinners to raise donations for this program. Many Units also held poppy distribution events throughout their communities to raise awareness of The American Legion Auxiliary. The end of May brings Memorial Day. Units all over Arizona placed flags on headstones at the National Cemetery. Many BBQ's and potlucks were held.

Department of Arizona Auxiliary has had a wonderful year. As I look back on the past year, I am overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude. We have shared in countless moments of joy and sorrow and through all; we have formed an unbreakable bond. The loss of five Past Presidents this year has left an indelible mark on our hearts. Centennial Steward (1993 – 1994) -Sunset

December 27, 2024, Joyce Arent (2022-2021), National Historian (2009-2010), Sunset December 2024, Josie Herrera (2015-

2016) Sunset October 17, 2024, Jennie Molina (2021 – 2022) Sunset November 1, 2024. Their Legacies will continue to guide us.



Centennial Steward  
(1993 – 1994)



Joyce Arent  
(2022-2001)



Josie Herrera  
(2015 – 2016)



Helen Stout  
(1988 – 1989)



Jennie Molina  
(2021 – 2022)

God bless the United States of America!

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Lynda Griffin, 2024 – 2025 – Historian, Department of Arizona

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